

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Austria/USSR
 SUBJECT Ernst Fischer's Views on Present and Future Political Developments in Austria

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25X1 The following are remarks made by the Austrian Communist leader Ernst Fischer in a confidential discussion on 29 March 1948:

1. The pro-western policies of the Austrian socialist Party will prove to be a poor speculation, because the United States will not be able to render sufficient economic support. The delivery of finished goods through the Marshall Plan will be harmful to the Austrian economy and will create unemployment.
2. The Soviets are dissatisfied with the Austrian Communist Party and are seeking friends of the Volkdemokratie (people's democracy) in the ranks of the Socialist Party and the People's Party. The CP will, at the least, become a coordinating and rallying point for the Volkdemokraten (people's democrats) of all parties. The economic situation is certain to strengthen radical elements in the trade unions and produce opposition elements in the coalition parties. There are already some such "Fierliners" available. Comment: Fischer refused to mention names in this connection.
3. The Soviets have made it plain that they are not eager to push a Volkdemokratie in Austria, as long as no real inroads have been made into the trade unions. The Soviets frequently remind Austrian Communists of the more successful work of the Czech Communist Party in this respect.
4. The presence of occupation forces is detrimental to the development of a Volkdemokratie in Austria, especially because of the Austrians' dislike of the Soviet Army. The Soviets and the CP therefore are in favor of a State Treaty if it can be obtained cheaply.
5. In view of the present weakness of the CP, the Soviets do not contemplate early intervention in Austria. Certain eventualities, however, could force the Soviets to split the country. They would take action, for instance, if the Western Allies should encourage the establishment of an Austrian Army against Soviet opposition, especially if the Western Allies should provide military advisers and equipment.

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6. Serious danger of war does not exist because the Soviets do not wish war, and the Americans must realize that war would mean the loss of the European continent within a few weeks. Events in Greece have proved that the United States is not determined to take decisive action.
7. The establishment of a Volksdemokratie in Austria will not take place for another year or two, unless the Western Allies force Soviet intervention.

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